

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 107016
ORIGIN SS-25

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO CINCPAC

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COMSEVENTHFLT

S E C R E T STATE 107016

EXDIS MILITARY PLEASE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING REPEAT MUSCAT 735 ACTION SECSTATE INFO LONDON
MAY 8.

QUOTE SECRET MUSCAT 0735

EXDIS

LONDON ALSO FOR ASST. SECRETARY ATHERTON

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR MU US

SUBJECT: MASIRAH ISLAND

REF: (A) MUSCAT 0723, (B) STATE 100463, (C) MUSCAT 0644
(D) STATE 062009

1. FOREIGN MINISTER ZAWAWI ASKED TO SEE ME ON HOUR'S NOTICE
MAY 7. HE TOLLD ME HIS RETURN FROM LONDON WAS ADVANCED SEVERAL
DAYS BECAUSE OF URGENT BUSINESS RELATED TO SULTAN'S UPCOMING
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OFFICIAL VISITS TO RIYADH, CAIRO AND AMMAN (REPORTED SEPTTEL).

2. ZAWAWI SAID UNDERSECRETARY AL-ALAWI HAD TOLD HIM OF OUR
MAY 4 DISCUSSION. ZAWAWI CONFIRMED HIS INTENTION TO PRESENT
EMBASSY OFFICIAL NOT OR AIDE MEMOIRE SHORTLY REGARDING MASIRAH.
HE SAID IT WILL CONTAIN FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. SOAF WISHES OCCASIONAL USN VISITS TO MASIRAH BE HELD AT MAXIMUM OF SIX QUARTERLY AT LEAST FOR FIRST TWO OR THREE MONTHS. THIS IS BECAUSE OF HEAVY WORKLOAD GETTING MASIRAH AIRFIELD PROPERLY ACTIVATED AS SOAF FACILITY.

B. REGARDING OUR LIST OF DESIRABLE, AS AGAINST ESSENTIAL, P-3 SUPPORT FACILITIES, SOAF LACKS ELECTRICAL GROUND POWER UNIT AND/OR GROUND ENGINE AIRSTART UNIT AT MASIRAH. IT MAY SOON ACQUIRE IT, OR THEM. MEANWHILE SUCH UNIT OR UNITS ARE AVAILABLE AT SEEB AIRPORT NEAR MUSCAT AND COULD BE FLOWN TO MASIRAH IF AND WHEN NEEDED.

C. THERE WILL BE NO PROBLEM WITH OUR OTHER LOGISTIC REQUIREMENTS (REFUELING OVERNIGHT BILLETING. AIRCRAFT SECURITY, FILING AND WEATHER BRIEFING FACILITIES, AND MESSING FACILITIES).

3. AFTER THEN BRIEFLY SHUFFLING THROUGH A DOCUMENT ON HIS DESK, ZAWAQI ADDED THAT, IN ADDITION, SOAF AND DEFENSE MINISTRY ASK FOR A US GRANT-IN-AID OF R.O. 2 MILLION (DOLS 5.8 MILLION) ANNUALLY TOWARD THEIR ADMINISTRATION OF PILOT TRAINING SCHOOL AND REGULAR AIRFIELD OPERATION ON MASIRAH.

4. I SAID I WOULD REPORT ALL THIS TO WASHINGTON. IN MEANTIME, DCM SIZER, WHO WOULD BE IN CHARGE OF EMBASSY IN MY ABSENCE AND IS ENTIRELY FAMILIAR WITH MASIRAH SUBJECT, WOULD AWAIT PARA 3 ABOVE MIGHT TAKE SOME TIME, I ASKED HOW OMANGOV MIGHT VIEW POSSIBILITY OF RENEWAL OF OUR P-3 VISITS IN THE INTERIM. ZAWAWI SAID THIS WOULD BE WELCOMED.

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5. BY WAY OF APOLOGY ZAWAWI SAID HE INTENDED CONVEY OMANGOV RESPONSE TO ME FORTNIGHT AGO (REF C) BUT INTENTION MISFIRED BECAUSE HIS GOUT SUDDENLY AND PAINFULLY ACTED UP APRIL 21 THUS DELAYING AN IN-HOUSE DISCUSSION WITH BENNETT, LANDON AND BROWING. THAT SESSION, A NECESSARY PRELIMINARY TO SEEING ME, WAS PERFORCE DELAYED UNTIL THEIR RECENT AIR DEFENSE MEETINGS TOGETHER IN UK.

6. COMMENT: I THINK WE SHOULD NOT REACT PREMATURELY TO THIS ZAWAWI PRESENTATION BUT AWAIT THE PAPER HE PROMISED TO SEE EXACTLY HOW OMANIS ARE CASTING THEIR RESPONSE. ALSO RECOMMEND HOLDING UP, AT LEAST UNTIL MY HOPED-FOR DISCUSSION WITH ASST. SECRETARY ATHERTON MAY 10. OUR PROPOSED REQUEST TO OMANGOV FOR SECOND QUARTER VISITS (REF B PARA 4). END COMMENT
WOLLE UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

SECRET

NNN

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